

Hedgehogs
British hedgehogs (Latin name: *Erinaceus europaeus*) are found almost everywhere, except some of the Scottish islands. Hedgehogs are well established in urban habitats and can, somewhat surprisingly, survive very well in cities, making good use of cemeteries, railway land, wasteland and both public and private gardens. Sadly, there are fewer than one million hedgehogs left in the UK and the number is declining. Since 2002, we have lost around 30% of our hedgehog population. They are becoming increasingly reliant on gardens, so whether you live in the town or the country, you can help to look after garden wildlife like hedgehogs by providing food, water and shelter.

Diet

Hedgehogs are a gardener's friend, as they like to feast on snails, slugs and insects, such as beetles, caterpillars and earthworms. Many householders put out a saucer of meat-based pet food for their prickly friends. Hedgehogs will treat this as a welcome supplement to its normal diet and will not go hungry if, for some reason, the food is not put out. In the summer months, hedgehogs would benefit from being left a dish of water; however, it is important that they are never fed milk, as it can cause diarrhoea.

Creating a hedgehog-friendly garden

- Cover drains and holes and place bricks at the side of ponds to give hedgehogs an easy route out. Cover swimming pools overnight and when not in use.
- Check for hedgehogs before using strimmers or mowers, particularly under hedges where animals may rest. Check compost heaps for nesting hogs before forking over.
- Build bonfires as close to time of lighting as possible and make sure to check them thoroughly before lighting.
- Remove sports or fruit netting when not in use to prevent hedgehogs becoming entangled and getting injured.
- Slug pellets are poisonous to hedgehogs and should only be used as a last resort. Instead, you could try using one of many natural alternatives, such as sprinkling crushed eggshells or coffee grounds around the plants you need to protect.

Hedgehog homes

It's important to pick a shady, quiet spot to put your assembled house, as hedgehogs may be frightened by busy or noisy areas. Ideally, your box should be made from untreated wood and should have a short, raised tunnel to access it. Don't be tempted to skip the tunnel - it means that predators won't be able to swipe their paws inside! Cover with a polythene sheet and pack soil and dead leaves around the outside, leaving the entrance free of debris.

For more hedgehog hints and tips subscribe to our monthly newsletter or visit the British Hedgehog Preservation Society website at www.thebritishhedgehogs.org.uk

Hedgehogs

- 1) What is the name of the organisation that produced this information?

- 2) Find and copy a group of words that shows that it was unexpected that hedgehogs would thrive in built-up areas. _____
- 3) Complete the sentence by circling the correct response. Since 2002, the number of hedgehogs in the UK is.....
 going up staying roughly the same going down
- 4) In which section are you likely to find information about hedgehog shelters?

5) Which of these are ways that you can help hedgehogs? Tick the correct answers

Providing meat-based pet food	<input type="checkbox"/>
Putting a hedgehog house by your back door to regularly check on them	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing a saucer of milk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using natural alternatives to slug pellets	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) Look at the introduction. Find and copy a word which shows that hedgehogs need gardens in order to survive. _____

7) Using information from the text, decide whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Hedgehogs eat a range of insects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hedgehogs need pet food in order to survive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hedgehogs can become stuck in netting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood used for hedgehog homes should be treated with waterproofing spray or paint.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) Which word in the text shows that some items used in the garden can make hedgehogs extremely unwell? _____

9) Why is it important that there is a tunnel into hedgehog houses?

So that small children can't play with them	<input type="checkbox"/>
So that they are safe from other animals	<input type="checkbox"/>
To keep the house warm	<input type="checkbox"/>
To hide the house from view	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) Why are hedgehogs referred to as 'a gardener's friend'?

Airborne Amphibians in Aerial Assault

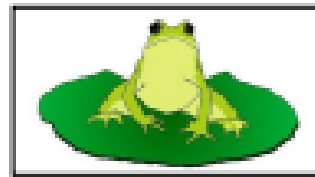
Town terrorised by flying frogs

By Mary Lawrence (senior correspondent)

On the evening of Tuesday 3rd July 2019, the residents of Little Marsh (Essex) were left in shock when they were bombarded by a group of flying frogs.

When 24-year-old Michael Granger was driving home from work on Tuesday evening, he was stunned to see a shocking sight in the sky. "I was just driving home when I saw a frog in the sky. Then another one! I honestly couldn't believe my eyes. I thought I was dreaming," he reported. He went on to explain that he estimated that there were close to a hundred frogs (complete with lily pads) travelling in the direction of Little Marsh at a speed of approximately 10 mph.

A few hours later, several households on the outskirts of the town began to report peculiar events relating to frogs. Elsie Watson (a 67-year-old widow) was hanging out her washing at about 6.30 pm when she was ambushed by a flock of frogs that weaved in and out of the clothes she was trying to peg to the washing line. "It was so bizarre!" Mrs Watson commented. "One moment I was hanging out my washing and the next thing I knew there was a frog in the pair of pink, spotty pants I was holding!" Two of the frogs became entangled in the clothes while a third fell asleep in her wash basket. A few houses down, plumber Michael Collins (54) called the police when he opened his window to let in some fresh air and instead let in a group of amphibians who proceeded to fill his kitchen and chase his cat.



Frenzied frogs! The creatures caused chaos around the town.

Within the hour, reports were flying in thick and fast from all over Little Marsh concerning the airborne amphibians. Many residents of the town reported being knocked into by frogs or having wet lily pads land on their heads. Police squads and RSPCA representatives were immediately dispatched to the affected areas to offer support to the victims and try to capture the loose animals. In a statement to the press, Detective Campbell commented, "At this moment, we do not know where these frogs have originated from or why they are here. However, we are working as hard as we can to remove them and restore normality to the town of Little Marsh." He continued on to say that anyone who saw the frogs should inform Essex Police straight away.

Currently, the frogs are beginning to return back to their natural habitats and a clean-up operation has begun in order to remove all traces of the lily pads that had been scattered across the streets. The RSPCA is working closely with the police to determine how the frogs were able to fly and whether it was an isolated incident.

- 1) Which word in the text is closest in meaning to 'guessed'? _____
- 2) Order the events in the order that they occur in the text.

A widow was hanging her washing out	
People from the RSPCA arrived on scene	
Michael Granger was driving home from work	
The clean-up operation began	

- 3) Roughly how fast were the frogs travelling? _____
- 4) Look at the paragraph beginning 'Within the hour,...' Which word shows that the frogs were flying? _____
- 5) Using information from the text, decide whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The frogs left a mess behind them.		
The town was in Sussex.		
The authorities were sent to deal with the issue.		
The police knew exactly where the frogs came from		

- 6) Find and copy a group of words that shows that many people reported incidents with frogs in a short period of time. _____
- 7) One of the residents of Little Marsh thought that he had imagined the flying frogs. Give one piece of evidence that shows this. _____

- 8) Which word in the text is closest in meaning to 'attacked'? _____
- 9) 'Police squads and RSPCA representatives were immediately *dispatched* to the affected areas to offer support to the victims and try to capture the loose animals.' In this sentence, the word 'dispatched' is closest in meaning to...

Hired	
Separated	
Sent off	
Collected	

- 10) Who first saw the frogs flying? _____